

Killer ants are on the march!

An army of killer ants is on the attack. Rodriguez knows the ants are coming. But he is not afraid. He and his workers are ready to fight.

What will happen when the ants arrive? Will Rodriguez's battle plan work? Or will the ants eat the workers alive?

Phonics Focus

prefixes <i>pre-</i> and <i>re-</i>	long <i>i</i> <i>igh</i>	other long <i>i</i> spellings	other long <i>o</i> spellings
prejudge • refill	night	wild • kind	told • bolted

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ANT ATTACK!

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BASED ON A STORY BY CARL STEPHENSON



SCHOLASTIC

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Smart Words

- 1 attack** *verb*
To try to hurt someone or something.

*The snake will **attack** the mouse.*



- 2 drown** *verb*
To sink into water and die.
*Will the ant **drown**?*

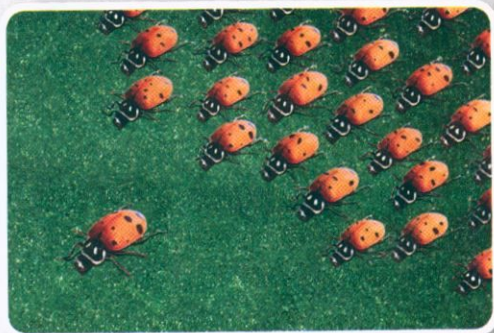
- 3 horror** *noun*
Extreme fear.
*She screamed in **horror** when she saw the ants!*



4 **invade** *verb*

To enter a place as an enemy.

*The bugs are about to **invade**.*



5

precaution *noun*

Something you do to stop something bad from happening.

*The man wore a helmet as a **precaution** against ant attacks.*

6 **reassure** *verb*

To bring back someone's feeling that everything is okay.

*Please **reassure** me that the ants cannot hurt us.*



The Ants Are Coming!

Rodriguez isn't afraid of ants.

A man named Rodriguez owned a big farm. A river ran past the farm.

One day, a boat came up the river. A man got off the boat. He approached Rodriguez and his farm workers. The man looked frightened.

"Killer ants are coming!" the man yelled. "They will **invade** your farm! You must leave now. You must escape by boat!"

Rodriguez began to laugh.



"Killer ants are coming!" the man yelled.

“Ants? Who’s afraid of ants?” he asked.

“Don’t prejudge these ants,” the man warned. “They are not just any ants! They can eat a whole cow in 10 seconds. They are very bold. They **attack** people, too!”

Rodriguez and the workers laughed again. They were not frightened.

“Boats are waiting at the river,” the man said. “They are leaving soon. They will not return. You should escape with us now. The ants will invade before dawn.”

“You are kind to warn us,” Rodriguez said. “But we’re not afraid of ants. We won’t leave our farm.” Rodriguez raised his fist. The crowd of workers cheered. The man left alone.

React

If you worked on the farm, would you want to leave? Why or why not?



Ready for Battle

Rodriguez has a plan.

Rodriguez watched the boats sail away. He turned to his workers. “The ants will not get us,” he assured them. “But we must take **precautions!** Lock up all the animals. Then dig two ditches around the farm.”

The workers trusted Rodriguez. But some of them were frightened.

“We will be safe,” Rodriguez **reassured** them. “The ants may find us. But we will attack them before they attack us.”

That night, the workers dug the ditches. They filled the first ditch with water. The ants would fall in and **drown**.

If any ants did not drown, the second ditch would stop them. The ditch was filled with gas. The workers could light the gas on fire. Then, the ditch would become a wall of fire!

The workers were nervous. They hoped the plan would work. They went to bed and tried to get some sleep.

The next morning, the workers were jolted awake by terrible screams. The workers ran outside. In the barn, the animals were screaming in **horror**! They were trying to escape. The animals knew that the ants were about to invade.

Rodriguez climbed onto the barn roof. He looked through binoculars. He shouted, "There they are!"



Rodriguez stood on the barn roof. "There they are!"

The ants were coming! Rodriguez did not like what he saw. Millions of ants were on the march. Rodriguez had never seen anything like it. It was a wild sight.

The ants marched toward the farm. They reached the first ditch. The workers looked at Rodriguez. They were afraid that their plan might not work.

Rodriguez raised his fist above his head. "The war begins!" he shouted.

React

Do you think the ditches will stop the ants? Explain.



The Invasion

Can the ants be stopped?

The ants marched right into the first ditch. At first, they drowned by the thousands. The workers laughed. Their plan was working!

Rodriguez and the workers stepped over the second ditch. They stood beside the first ditch. They watched as more ants drowned. They laughed and laughed.

Then the workers looked into the water. Suddenly, they gasped in horror.

The first ditch had not drowned all the ants. Live ants were walking on the dead ants! They were using the dead ants as a bridge. The second ditch had to work.

The workers looked at Rodriguez.

"Everyone!" Rodriguez shouted. "Return to the barn!"

The workers ran to the barn. But two men fell down. They did not make it past the second ditch.

The men screamed. The other workers turned to look at them. What the workers saw filled them with horror.

The men were covered in ants. The ants were eating them alive! Soon, the screaming stopped.

Next, the ants marched into the second ditch. They fell right into the gas!

Rodriguez shouted, "Burn, ants, burn!" He lit a match. He threw it into the gas.

The ditch became a wall of fire!

The ants didn't stop. They marched in the flames. Thousands of ants burned. Behind them, more ants kept coming.

Rodriguez began to feel afraid. So all the gas would burn up. The fire would go out. What would happen if some ants were still alive? There would be no time to refill the ditch. There would be no way to relight the fire.

Rodriguez did not show his fear. "We're safe for now," he assured his workers. "Let them get some rest."

But the workers could not rest. They could only think of the hungry ants. They imagined the ants coming after them.



A Dangerous Plan

The ants are still coming!

The next morning, the wall of fire was still burning. The ants were still marching into the flames. But the fire would not last much longer. It would not kill all the ants. Rodriguez had to make a new plan.

Rodriguez climbed on top of the barn. He looked down at the river. A few miles away, there was a dam. The dam kept the water low. It kept the river from flooding the farm.

Rodriguez made a plan. He would open up the dam. Water would flood the farm. The ants would be washed away!

There was just one problem. Could Rodriguez reach the dam alive? He would have to run through the ants to get there!

Rodriguez took precautions. He dressed in thick clothes. He put on a helmet. The workers tied his clothes tightly.

Rodriguez told the workers to climb to the roof of the barn. "There, you'll be safe when the flood comes," he said.

Could Rodriguez fight off the ants? If he didn't, he would die. But he had to try. If he didn't open the dam, everyone would die. The ants would get them all. Rodriguez had to get to that dam.

"I will return!" he said boldly.



Facing the Ants

Will Rodriguez survive the trip?

The workers watched from the roof of the barn. They saw Rodriguez jump over the wall of fire. He landed safely on the other side.

Then, Rodriguez ran as fast as he could. The ants began to attack. With each step, a hundred ants stuck to his boots. Soon, they were inside the boots. Rodriguez could feel them chewing on his ankles. He had to get to the dam quickly!



Rodriguez prepared to run through the ants.

Finally, Rodriguez made it to the dam. The ants were now inside his pants! They were climbing up his legs. Rodriguez told himself to stay calm. He had to open up the dam!

The dam had a lever that opened it. Rodriguez pushed and pulled the lever. Finally, the dam opened. Water began to rush toward the farm.

Rodriguez's legs were covered with ants. They were biting him nonstop. He tried to take a step. He fell to his knees. But he did not give up. He got back on his feet.

Soon, the ants reached his arms. Rodriguez was unable to fight any longer. He stopped moving. He let himself fall. He screamed in horror.

The ants were all over his body!



Death to the Ants!

Can the workers save Rodriguez?

The workers watched as Rodriguez fell. “He needs help!” one man said. “I’m going to help him. Who’s going with me?”

Five other workers joined the man. They put on helmets and thick clothes. They bolted through ants. They ran through water. They reached Rodriguez. They carried him to the barn roof.

The workers picked the ants off Rodriguez. But he did not wake up.

The workers stood on the roof. They watched as the river flooded the farm. Rodriguez had stopped the attack. The killer ants were dead!

The workers were silent. No one knew what to say. They had survived an amazing horror. But the farm was ruined and Rodriguez seemed to be dead.

Then the workers heard a cough. They turned to Rodriguez. His mouth curled into a smile. "I told you I'd return," he said.

React

Was it worth it for Rodriguez and his workers to fight the ants? Explain.



"I told you I'd return," Rodriguez told the workers.



Respond

Think. Talk. Write.

Did this story scare you? Why or why not?

Use this sentence starter to talk or write about your answer.

This story did/did not scare me because ...

Re-read.

Look for the answers to these questions.

Why did the workers dig two ditches around the farm?

How did Rodriguez get rid of the ants?

WORDS TO KNOW

Phonics Focus

prefix <i>pre-</i>	prefix <i>re-</i>	long <i>i</i> , <i>igh</i>	other long <i>i</i> spellings	long <i>o</i> spellings
prejudge	refill relight return	fight frightened light might night relight right sight tightly	wild behind find kind	bold told bolted jolted

Smart Words

attack
drown

horror
invade

precaution
reassure

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